

1. In a system for effectuating the shipment appointment-making process between one or more buyers and sellers and their third party providers (collectively called Partners) in a supply community, a process including the steps of: a ship location Partner creating, configuring, and maintaining an appointment calendar; one or more other Partners contemporaneously querying the appointment calendar for a specific ship location to determine available pick-up and delivery dock times; the one or more other Partners submitting an appointment reservation request to the ship location Partner; and the ship location Partner declining or accepting the appointment reservation request.

2. The process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the appointment calendar is created, configured, and managed in such a manner as to consider and incorporate the operating hours of the ship location and the number of dock doors in operation during those hours of operation, the peak and off-peak hours of the ship location for any reason, the duration of each dock time slot, any dock time slots set aside by the ship location for any reason and thereby unavailable to the one or more other Partners for requesting an appointment reservation, the lead-time required for requesting an appointment reservation of a dock time slot in the appointment calendar, the appointment reservation request auto-approval aging time, and the appointment-making privileges of the one or more other Partners as specified by ship location Partner.

3. The method as claimed in claim 2 wherein the appointment-making privileges specified by the ship location Partner include the privilege to request a

pre-appointment, the privilege to request a repeating standing appointment, and the privilege to self-appoint appointments.

4. The method as claimed in claim 2 wherein the ship location Partner may elect to manually review and approve or decline the appointment reservation requests and to auto-accept the appointment reservation requests for any Partners that have not been granted self-appointing privileges by that ship location Partner after the appointment request auto-approval aging time specified by the ship location Partner has elapsed.

5. The method as claimed in claim 2 wherein the ship location is owned by at least one Partner.

6. The method as claimed in claim 2 wherein the ship location is a third-party owned facility serving one or more Partners.

7. The method as claimed in claim 2 wherein at least one Partner is a carrier.

8. The method as claimed in claim 2 wherein at least one Partner is a shipper.

9. The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein a Partner may query and view appointment information for any appointment reservation request and for

any approved appointment reservation provided that the appointment reservation is relevant to that Partner including the entirety of a multi-Partner multi-segment tour so as to facilitate Partner collaboration in the planning of the multi-Partner shipment.

10. The method as claimed in claim 9 wherein the entirety of the multi-Partner multi-segment tour includes continuous move and multi-stop pick-up and delivery shipments.

11. A system for effectuating the shipment appointment-making process between one or more buyers and sellers and their third-party service providers (collectively called Partners) in a supply community, the system comprising: means by which a ship location Partner can create, configure and maintain an appointment calendar for the ship location; means for one or more other Partners to query the appointment calendar for a ship location to determine available pick-up and delivery dock times; means for the one or more other Partners to submit an appointment reservation request to the ship location Partner; and means for the ship location Partner to decline or accept the appointment reservation request.

12. The system as claimed in claim 11 wherein the appointment calendar is created, configured and managed in such a manner as to consider and incorporate the operating hours of the ship location and the number of dock doors in operation during those hours of operation, the peak and off-peak hours

of the ship location for any reason, the duration of each dock time slot, any dock time slots set-aside by the ship location for any reason and thereby unavailable to the one or more other Partners for requesting an appointment reservation, the lead-time required for requesting an appointment reservation of a dock time slot in the appointment calendar, the appointment reservation request auto-approval aging time, and the appointment-making privileges of the one or more other Partners as specified by the ship location Partner.

13. The system as claimed in claim 12 wherein the appointment-making privileges specified by the ship location Partner include the privilege to request a pre-appointment, the privilege to request a repeating standing appointment, and the privilege to self-appoint appointments.

14. The system as claimed in claim 13 wherein the ship location Partner may elect to manually review and approve or decline the appointment reservation requests and to auto-accept the appointment reservation requests for any other Partners that have not been granted self-appointing privileges by that ship location Partner after the appointment request auto-approval aging time specified by the ship location Partner has elapsed.

15. The system as claimed in claim 12 wherein the ship location is owned by a Partner.

16. The system as claimed in claim 12 wherein the ship location is a third party owned facility serving one or more Partners.

17. The system as claimed in claim 10 wherein one Partner is a carrier.

18. The system as claimed in claim 10 wherein at least one Partner is a shipper.

19. The system as claimed in claim 10 wherein a Partner may query and view appointment information for any appointment reservation request and for any approved appointment reservation provided that the appointment reservation is relevant to that Partner including the entirety of a multi-Partner multi-segment tour to facilitate Partner collaboration in the planning of multi-Partner shipments.

20. The system as claimed in claim 19 wherein the entirety of the multi-Partner multi-segment tour includes continuous move and multi-stop and delivery shipments.

21. The system as claimed in claim 20 wherein the appointment-making privileges include the privilege to request a pre-appointment, the privilege to request repeating standing appointments, and the privilege to self-appoint appointments; the ship location Partner may manually review and accept and reject the appointment requests and auto-accept the requests after a

location-specified appointment request auto-approval aging time has elapsed; the ship location is owned by a Partner; the ship location is a third party owned facility serving one or more Partners; at least one Partner is a carrier; at least one Partner is a shipper; a Partner may query and view appointment information for any appointment reservation request and for any approved appointment reservation provided that the appointment reservation is relevant to that Partner including the entirety of a multi-Partner multi- segment tour so as to facilitate Partner corroboration in the planning of the multi-Partner shipment; and the entirety of the multi-Partner multi-segment tour includes continuous move and multi-stop pick-up and delivery shipments.